

# Social media in crises

90 whole minutes with Seamus Boyer



BAU



Emergency



BAU



Emergency

## Good emergency social media is...

- Timely and accurate
- Clear and easy-to-understand
- Interesting and engaging
- Relevant to our audiences
- Accessible and inclusive
- A two-way street, not just a megaphone
- Authentic, human and relatable
- Looks after your people, too

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The rules of social media always apply on  
social media

The unique benefits of social media are  
only as powerful as our willingness to  
embrace them

## About me

- Social media consultant
- Specialise in the public sector
- Journalist by trade
- Strategic comms manager
- Work with councils, CCOs, govt depts, NGOs, and corporate clients





# What we'll cover

- Things to do during BAU
- Things to do in emergencies
- The power of the comments section
- After an emergency
- Monday morning actions



seamus.nz

## Social Media Crisis Checklist

### Team readiness and access

- Do you have a backup plan if your main social advisor is unavailable?
- Are passwords securely stored and accessible to essential team members?
- Do you have updated contact information for team members and partner social media advisors?
- Has your team received basic social media training to step in as needed?
- Is your team trained in scenario planning and prepared for future crises?

### Audience reach and channel strategy

- Is your channel mix aligned with where your audiences spend time?
- In general, are you aiming to broaden your reach, deepen engagement, or both?
- Do you know the key community group admins you can reach out to if needed?
- Can you post in community groups or forums like Reddit to expand your reach?
- Are you regularly guiding your engaged followers to owned channels (e.g. website, email, app)?

What is the number one thing about  
emergency social media that might keep  
you up at night?

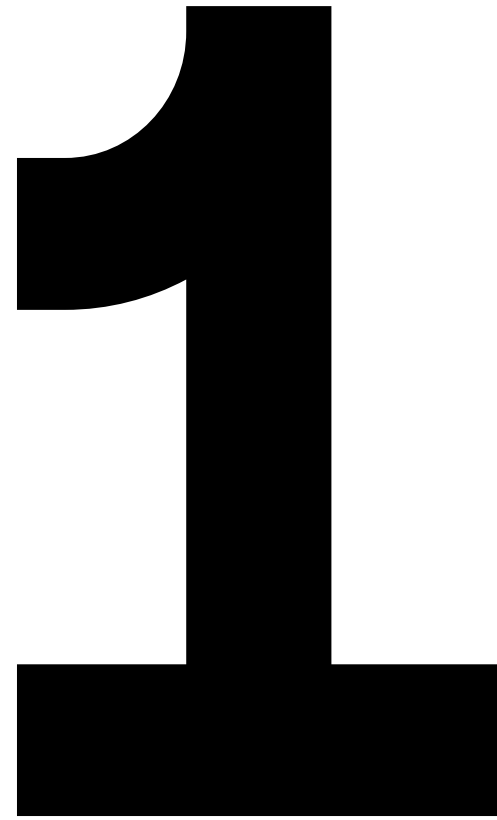


5

things you shouldn't  
have to worry about in  
an emergency...

# Access and admins

- Passwords and central access
- Enough people with admin access and basic training
- Phone numbers of other social teams
- What happens if your social advisor is away?



# 2

## Your channel strategy

- Can you reach the people you need to?
- Plan for supplying info to other pages/groups
- Contact details for community admins
- Are you trying to broaden or deepen your engagement?



Awareness

Interest

Action

Advocacy

# 3

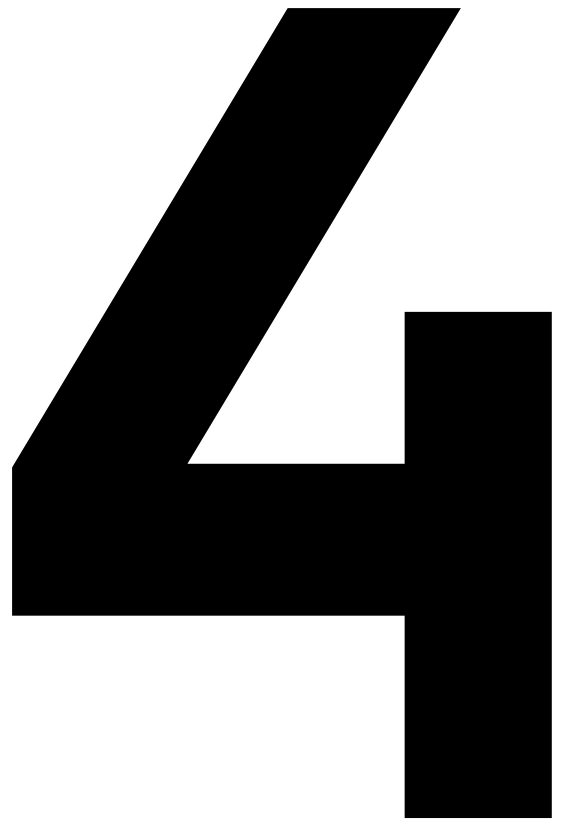
## Your engagement strategy

- Clear standards for behaviour
- Do you enforce them?
- Encouraging team to connect and care
- Comfortable taking part in tricky conversations
- Inviting views from quieter followers
- Apologising when you get it wrong
- Actively fighting misinformation



## Initiative and sign-off

- Team are supported to take initiative
- Freedom to act and respond
- Make messages channel-specific
- Adjust tone based on audience knowledge
- Clarity around sign-off process



# Converting to owned channels

- Training audiences where to go (website)
- Encouraging more engaged audiences to more direct channels (email, text, app)



**What are you most/least clear and confident about?**



1. Access and admins
2. Channel strategy
3. Engagement strategy
4. Initiative and sign-off
5. Converting to owned channels

5

things you should be  
worrying about in an  
emergency...

**1**

**Sharing information**

**2**

**Amplifying information**

**3**

**Gathering information**

**4**

**Managing misinformation**

## **Why not just turn comments off altogether?**

- A million reasons

## **However, you can (and maybe should) do if...**

- You know it's going to get ugly
- It won't provide value to anyone
- Provide a platform for hate, misinformation or legal issues
- You don't have the people/will to police it

## Relating and reassuring

- Being authentic and human
- Showing empathy and humour
- Pick your moments
- In emergencies, social media can become a very intimate experience for people

5

## Midnight Update



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GROUP

‘Hi vampire squad,  
Here's a bit of a plan for  
how the next wee while  
might look...’



# Summer 2023

Would not recommend



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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

GROUP

## Scenario:

1. There's been a series of storms
2. Community are fed up
3. But there's more rain coming
4. Could cause disruption
5. What's your post intro?





# The power of the comments section

# Comments checklist

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Is it a genuine question?



Have I already answered them?



Does it include incorrect info?



Is it a threat or abuse?



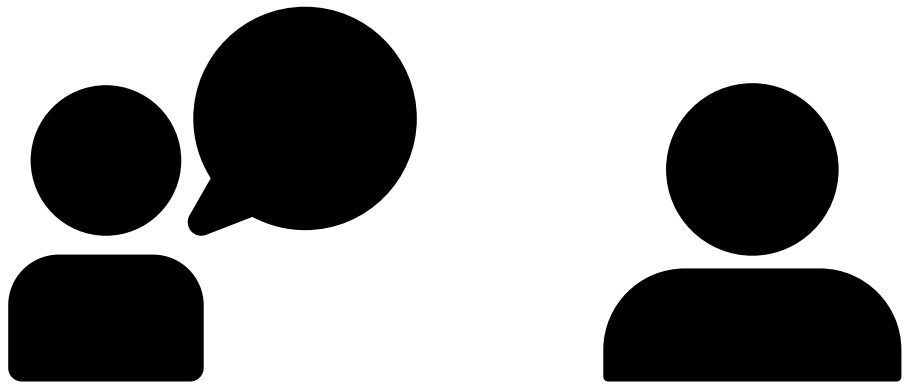
Is it something I can deal with on social?



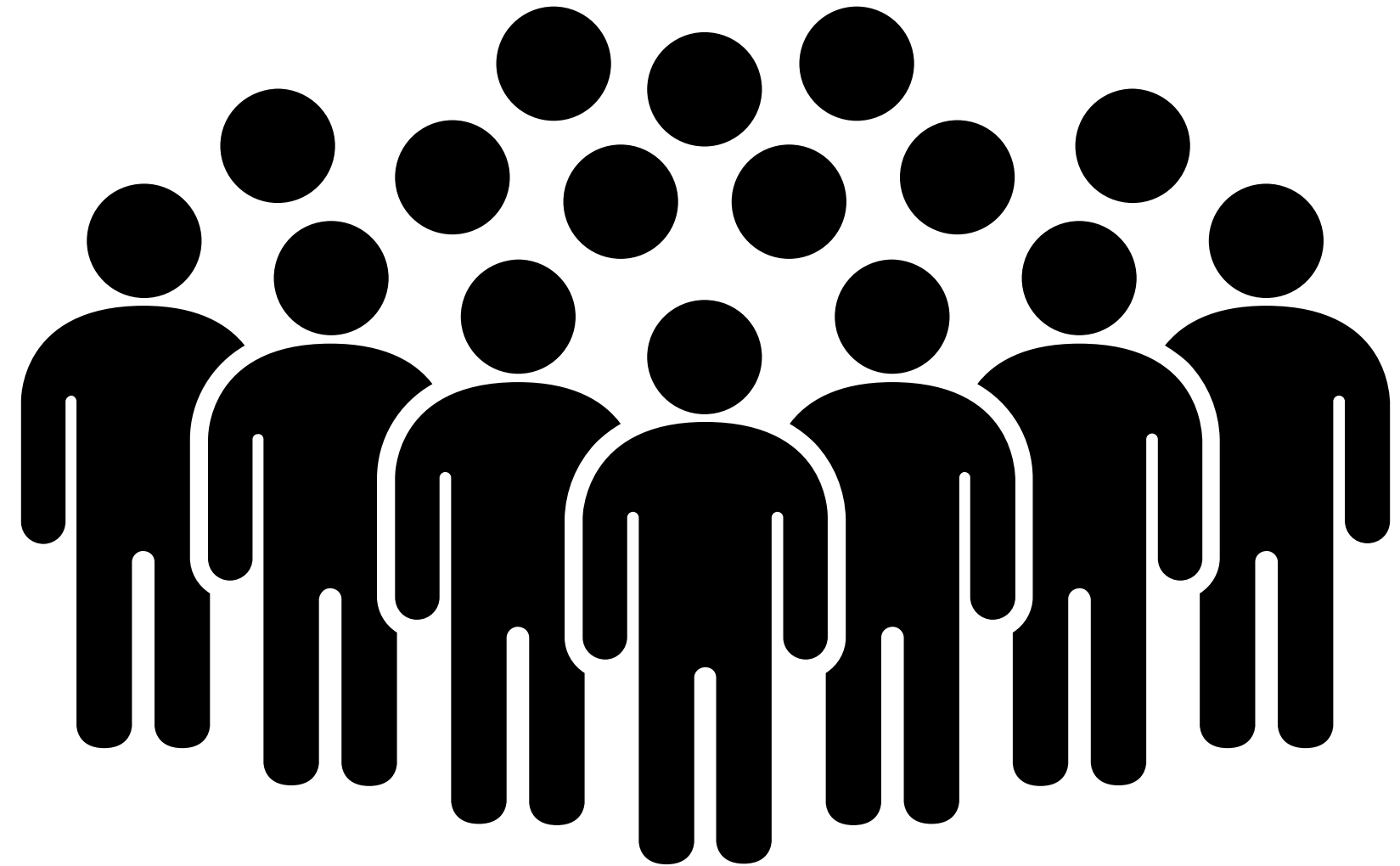
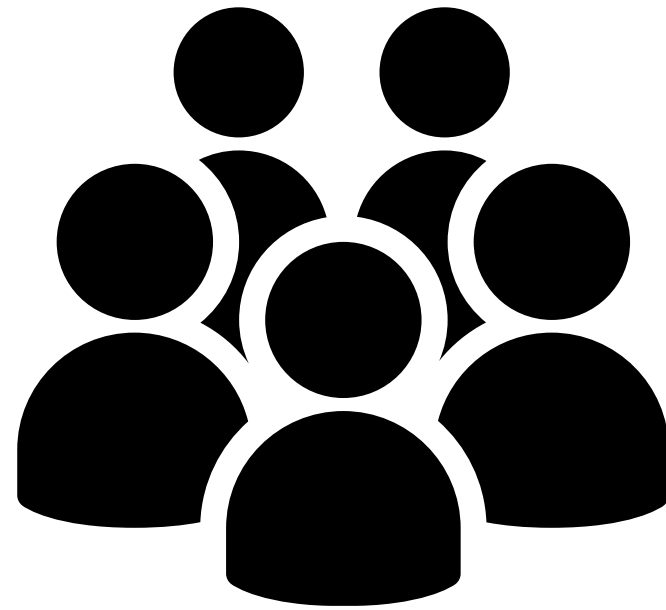
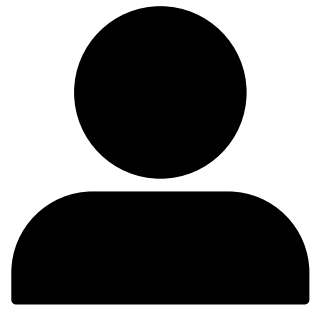
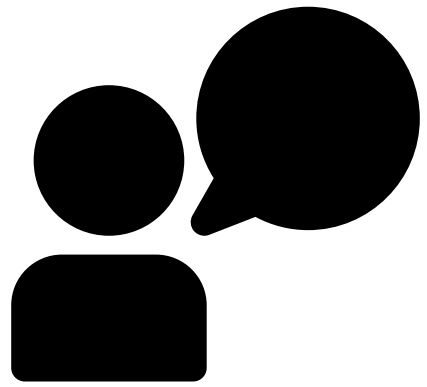
Is there an opportunity to increase connection?



# Multiple audiences



# Multiple audiences



# What's the response?



- 5 Questions
- Aim is to build connection
- For at least one response you can't use words
- 3 mins for each

”

**Anyone else refreshing their feed every 30 seconds? Super stressed over here.**



”

**Your last update said there was power in our area, but we're still in the dark. Why the misinformation?!**

”

How can we trust what you say  
when you can't even spell  
properly?

”

Is my water safe to drink  
lol



”

**Thank you for all you're doing to  
keep us informed. We appreciate  
the updates and hard work!**

**After an emergency**

# How do you keep your new followers

- Keep providing value
- Keep connecting
- Keep relating
- Keep doing cool stuff

# Thunderstorm warning for Bay of Plenty



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# Miserable Weather Alert



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## Burger\* WATCH



All the ingredients for  
burgers are here..  
but burgers are not  
guaranteed

## Burger WARNING



Burgers are already  
made..  
but you might not get  
served any

## Burger EVENT



Burgers for dinner,  
and you don't get a  
choice

\*If severe weather was  
burgers



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## **Paua Fritter Watch**

**The ingredients are there  
to make a Paua Fritter but it  
might not come to anything**



## **Paua Fritter Warning**

**There is definitely  
a Paua Fritter now**



# Watch vs Warning

(Cheese Rolls Version)

## CHEESE ROLL WATCH:

We have all the ingredients for cheese rolls, but haven't made them yet



## CHEESE ROLL WARNING:

The cheese rolls are here, we're having them NOW!





NSW SES

5 days ago · 🌐



Why didn't the skeleton make a very good volunteer?



😂👍 209

74 comments 10 shares



Like



Comment



Share

# Why didn't the skeleton make a very good volunteer?



  209

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 Like



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 Author  
**NSW SES**  
Because their heart wasn't in it. 🦴  
Got a heart? ❤️ Sign up here: <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer/> ✓  
5d Like Reply Edited 125  

[View all 4 replies](#)

 **Paul Mcgilvray**  
Didn't have the spine. Heard he joined a band however, and plays the trumbONE.  
4d Like Reply 5 

 **Wendy Waterford**  
Because they struggled to get the job done with a skeleton crew.  
5d Like Reply 7  

 **Patricia Clark**  
He was just a shell of his old self  
5d Like Reply 9  

 **Kevin Johns**  
Because he had no guts  
5d Like Reply 20  



Wellington Region Emergency Management Office

July 27 · 🌐



Say it with me now:

"I will tie down my trampoline when it is windy..." 🗣️



👍👍 145

18 comments 22 shares

# Tips on preparing for severe weather



**Stay informed about weather warnings**



**Tell others about incoming weather events**



**Remain in a safe, secure place during severe weather**



**Pack an emergency kit with essential items like snacks**

**1**

**thing you plan to follow up  
on or put into action on  
Monday...**

“You cannot overtake fifteen cars when it's sunny, **but you can when it is raining.**”

- Ayrton Senna



<https://www.seamus.nz/resources/social-media-crisis-checklist>

# Any questions?



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